



NEWS RELEASE

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CEO of Massage School That Lost License From California Department of Consumer Affairs' Bureau Now Faces Criminal Indictments

Sacramento—The Los Angeles County Criminal Grand Jury has unsealed indictments against the CEO of JHJ Education College, a massage therapy school that was served with a notice of denial and revocation of its license by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education (BPPVE). Sun Ok Joo, the CEO of the school was charged with two felony counts of violating California's Education Code as well as one felony count of Conspiracy to Commit the Crime of Pimping and Pandering and one felony count of Pandering by Procuring.

Five other people were also indicted in the case. Sunhi Lee, Wilford Thomas Johnson, Guy Sullivan Wilson, Tami Vanover and Maria Molina were charged with felony Pimping and Pandering by Procuring as well as Conspiracy to Commit the Crime of Pimping and Pandering by Procuring. Wilford Thomas Johnson and Sunhi Lee were also charged with two felony counts of money laundering.

Students at the school were allegedly sold massage therapist certificates without completing the 500 hours of required training. The massage school certificate/diploma was needed to get a license from the Los Angeles Police Department Licensing Division to work at a massage parlor or spa. State inspectors and investigators began investigating in 1998 when the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education (BPPVE) received an anonymous complaint that the institution was

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selling certificates of completion. BPPVE worked with investigators from the Los Angeles Police Department licensing Division and the Sheriff's Department vice-squad. A decoy arranged to buy a diploma from the school. She was also immediately offered employment after buying the certificate. A search warrant was served and the school raided by law enforcement authorities in early September 2003.

This is the second such action initiated by the BPPVE to shut down a school this past year in California. The other was in the San Francisco Bay Area. "We are putting other operators on notice," said Charlene Zettel, Director of the California Department of Consumer Affairs. "We will go after individuals who try and use the system for illegal purposes and we will team up with local law enforcement authorities to make sure they are prosecuted under criminal law."

The case is being prosecuted by Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

BACKGROUND FACTS

- Massage therapists are not licensed by the State. They are regulated by local agencies (health department, police, etc.)
- Students looking for a legitimate massage therapy school should look over the school campus, talk with instructors, along with potential employers, and graduates before making a commitment.

The California Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education regulates approximately 3,000 private postsecondary schools. To check on the approval status of a private postsecondary school, please call the Bureau at (916) 445-3427 or visit the Bureau's Web site at www.dca.ca.gov/bppv.

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